

MUSING ABOUT MEMPHIS

Report from District Director Margot Hennings

As I did in my report for Seattle, I will be citing only highlights of the recent NABC and ACBL Board meetings. I write an extended report covering all of the Board motions; if you would like to receive a copy of this—contact me at margot10bridge@cox.net. Despite the fact that it seemed like our bridge players were the only folks in town for the duration of the tournament—Memphis is definitely a quiet mid-sized city with seemingly not a lot happening right around the convention center—there were a number of outstanding restaurants, and if you missed the beat on Beale Street, you missed some really good blues! Because we were “the only game in town,” Memphians treated us like royalty by offering lots of specials on food and drink, and museum lines (hope you got to the Civil Rights Museum while you were there) were short, making it easy to really explore Memphis before an afternoon session of bridge. Speaking of museums, the Hall of Fame Museum and the library/archives at ACBL HQ in Horn Lake are truly impressive and ACBL made it easy to visit by running daily shuttles. The museum and the 75th anniversary party on the first Friday night made for top notch entertainment and were enjoyed by everyone I talked to who attended.

Memphis was the second NABC in a row that was not at a “stay and play under one roof” site. I am on the NABC Site Selection Advisory Committee and am particularly interested in your feedback about the sites where it is simply not possible to stay and play at a single hotel or even a single hotel that connects to a convention center. We have a number of these convention center configurations coming up and your input about a recent such site helps us make your experience at the next one even better.

Bridge in Memphis—HUGE congratulations to Hailong Ao of Herndon, VA and Jian-Jian Wang of Clarksville, MD for their win in the NABC+ IMP Pairs. This two-day qualifying event at the Spring NABC is scored by IMPs instead of matchpoints. Hailong and Jian-Jian did your District proud this year—not only did they win, but they almost lapped the field—their whopping score of 140.63 was almost double that of the second-place finishers, who had a “mere” 77.4!

The New CEO and President. New ACBL CEO Robert Hartman and new ACBL President Sharon Anderson got off to a great start in Memphis—Robert with an impressive report to the Board of his accomplishments to date since assuming the CEO position, and Sharon with an innovative and team-building approach to prioritizing actions and activities. ***A Pre-Alert to you all:*** Sharon will be attending the Bethesda Regional over the 4th of July and Robert will be coming to the DC area in early September to attend a Northern Virginia Bridge Association Sectional. I will send more information to Unit Presidents and District 6 Board members, so be sure to ask your local representative for more details.

Juniors—Several motions regarding Junior entry fees and the funds allocated to all Junior activities were passed in Memphis. Of most interest to our young players, Junior coupons will be made available for junior members in good standing for entry into ***events at NABCs***. Full-time students under the age of 26 and any Junior under the age of 21 may obtain coupons with a value of ***\$10 per session*** that can be used in ***any NABC event***. Also, any Junior 19 years and under will

be granted *free plays* for each session of *regionally rated events held at an NABC*. All monies from the Junior Fund will be retained by the ACBL and used for all Junior (ages 21 to 25) and Youth (under 21) activities. Both the United States Bridge Federation and the Canadian Bridge Federation may submit a budget to request funds from the ACBL at least 60 days prior to the Summer NABC for the following calendar year to support teams to represent our zone (Zone 2) in world championship events.

Strength of Field—The Board voted yet again to defer the Strength of Field changes to the Masterpoint chart to the Summer meeting in Philadelphia. This time, deferral is accompanied by a specific plan for “shadow” testing. This test period will begin on approximately May 1, and the results will be reviewed by both management and the BOD Masterpoint Committee and reported to the Board prior to its Summer meeting. Monitoring will include, but not be limited to, effects if any on masterpoint inflation, effects on masterpoints awarded at both Regional and Sectional events, and any geographic and demographic variations that might occur across ACBL.

GNT/NAP/Special Events—The first face-to-face meeting of the joint Board/GNT&NAP Coordinator Task Force (TF) took place immediately after the conclusion of the formal Board meetings. This TF is unique in that it comprises both members and non-members of the Board; therefore, it is most convenient to hold TF meetings right before the start of play at an NABC. The TF had met by telecom prior to Memphis and the results of that telecom were reported to the Board during its formal meetings. As Chair of this TF, I take special pride in the commitment the TF members have exhibited to date and look forward to further developing a “package” of ideas that will better define, market, and fund the NAPs and GNTs, the ACBL’s two “grass-roots” events. This package is being fed by the hard work of the GNT/NAP Coordinators’ Forum (CF), which held its second meeting in Memphis after a terrific jump-start in Seattle. Both the CF and TF will meet again in Philadelphia with the goal of having a comprehensive package of motions for the Board’s consideration at its Fall meetings in San Francisco. Conditions of Contest for the 2012-2013 NAPs and GNTs were passed at the Memphis Board meeting, so we will have to work within them, but it is important to have any financial items included in the proposed budget for 2013 that is presented for Board approval in the fall.

Cheating—A motion to impose additional (supplemental) penalties to players found guilty of severe conduct violations and/or ethical violations was deferred to the 2012 Summer meeting in Philadelphia. This was done to allow ACBL staff to complete a study of Masterpoint penalties imposed in disciplinary cases during the past ten years to help ensure consistency going forward.